



6/14/2005

Testimony HB 4679

The Michigan Environmental Council opposes House Bill 4679 for the following reasons; 1) allowing Downtown Development Authorities in Townships goes against what we feel is the original legislative intent of PA 197 (of 1975) and, 2) this legislation goes against the recommendations for Michigan's land use future laid out by the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council.

The legislative intent behind creating DDAs was the idea that "deteriorating property values" in downtown business districts constituted a statewide problem that was affecting economic growth. By creating DDAs that have the power to levy funds from multiple sources, including tax increment financing, millages and qualified bonds, the State of Michigan gave the power to the local governments that were being affected by "deteriorating property values" to authorize and fund studies and projects that would enhance the economic growth of their downtown business district.

The intent is clearly to support downtown urban areas that need financial assistance to reverse the trend of deteriorating property values. Allowing these kinds of programs to be constituted to finance new commercial development in areas without existing infrastructure would only increase the deterioration of the downtowns the DDAs were set up to protect.

House Bill 4679 violates the very intent of the recommendations laid out by the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council, specifically Chapter 4, Section #2, which states "The state should, in concert with local government, coordinate and review proposals to ensure that they effectively promote investment and reinvestment in existing urban areas that; *1) optimize the use of existing infrastructure, 2) encourage new retail business to serve urban residents, 3) create new employment opportunities, and 4) otherwise enhance the quality of life in urban communities.*"

Although the Michigan Environmental Council is encouraged by this legislation's attempt to provide incentives for Joint Municipal Planning Authorities we feel that tying them to new commercial development sets a precedent for their use that goes against their purpose of regional coordination for better development and redevelopment. Therefore we cannot support House Bill 4679

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Ben Stupka
Land Programs Associate

